



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

February 14, 2005

S. 263

Paleontological Resources Preservation Act

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
on February 9, 2005*

S. 263 would codify current administration policy regarding the preservation and use of paleontological resources on federal lands. (Paleontological resources include fossilized remains, traces, or imprints of organisms that are preserved in or on the Earth's crust.) The bill also would establish criminal and civil penalties for unlawful activities related to paleontological resources. CBO estimates that any budgetary impact of implementing the bill would be negligible.

The bill would prohibit taking or damaging paleontological resources located on federal lands without a permit or permission, selling or purchasing such resources received from federal lands, or submitting false records or identification for such resources removed from federal lands. As a result, the federal government would be able to pursue cases that it otherwise would not be able to prosecute. CBO expects that any increase in federal costs for law enforcement, court proceedings, or prison operations would not be significant, however, because of the small number of cases likely to be involved. Any such additional costs would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Because those prosecuted and convicted under S. 263 could be subject to criminal fines and civil penalties, the federal government might collect additional fines or penalties if the bill is enacted. Collections of such fines and penalties are recorded in the budget as revenues. Under existing law, criminal fines are deposited in the Crime Victims Fund and spent without further appropriations in subsequent years. Under the provisions of this bill, certain civil penalties also would be available to be spent without further appropriation. CBO expects that any additional revenue and direct spending as a result of enacting S. 263 would be less than \$500,000 each year and would offset each other over time.

S. 263 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Deborah Reis and Megan Carroll. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.